SYLLABUS—Writing 100 (“Rebels & Risk-takers”)

Mark Will-Weber--Office hours: Monday, 9 to 10 & 11:45 to 1; Wednesday, 9 to 10 & 11:45 to 1 at my office in the ARC. E-mail me in ADVANCE (or feel free to contact me before class or immediately after class) to set up an appointment at: coachwebs@aol.com

Instructor: Background/experience includes 10 years of newspaper experience, 13 years of magazine (writer/editor) experience, and various freelance projects, including two books. I also have an interest in poetry and fiction writing.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Objective: This course will use the theme (“Rebels & Risk-takers”) as a vehicle to create writing that is, first and foremost, organized and readable, but also reflects the flair and “voice” of the student. A primary objective will be to improve the student’s writing over the length of the course. In addition, the instructor will attempt to impress upon the students the importance of reading works of quality and creativity in order to improve their own writing and critical thought process. The major themes of the course will involve an exploration of “risk” as exhibited in various activities (For example, bullfighting, mountain climbing, gambling), plus the inherent risks involved with war and conflict.

Teaching Method: The primary method of teaching this course will be to start with several “warm-up” (some “in-class”, some “over-night”) writings and then—after providing critical feedback on these initial efforts—progress to graded assignments. Writing “tip sheets” on basic techniques (“action verbs” and “transition sentences”) and peer-editing, in-class sessions will be introduced and re-visited throughout the course.

REQUIREMENTS

Course Requirements: The “cornerstones” of the course will be three required papers/essays that relate to the reading material and/or class discussions. It is understood that students will demonstrate reasonable knowledge (through both writing and class discussion) of all assigned readings/films.

Grading: The three major writing assignments will account for approximately 75 percent of the student’s grade for the course. All of the major writing assignments will relate, in some way, to the assigned readings and/or the course topic. In addition, expect three to four brief, in-class writing and/or editing assignments. These in-class writings, along with class participation (discussion of all material, plus participations in peer-editing sessions) and class attendance, will account for approximately 25 percent of the student’s grade.

Text: Students will use the Bedford Handbook to bolster basic writing skills and techniques. In addition, all students will read Alan Sillitoe’s novelette, “The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner.” (The protagonist in Sillitoe’s story is one of literature’s classic “rebels.”) Other writers we will read and examine in our course will include
Ernest Hemingway (several of his journalistic essays on bullfighting); the Polish correspondent/journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski, a specialist on Africa; and Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky (on risk-taking and gambling.) The course will also included selected films, such as “Touching The Void.”